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The Teacher's First Year

Introduction

What happens to the teacher the first year? Is that first real flight a time of exultant confirmation of principles and practices learned in college? Or is it a period of patient and sometimes discouraging adjustments to new situations and to communities different from any known before?

Are the pupils more important to the happiness of young teachers than colleagues or friends in the community? What achievements during the first year seem most important and do they think of their profession? It is probable that most of the decisions to make teaching a life career or to get out of it by the first means available are made during the first few months. Often, too, is heard the story that he or she "has never been so happy nor felt so useful as now."

The first year is of vital importance in the making of a teacher. Just what goes into it can never be known for sure—nor what comes out. It is doubtful if a scientific study could be devised. There are too many variables; there is too much of the subjective. Yet no problem in education commands more attention.

In this issue of *The Teachers College Journal* representative beginning teachers talk about things that seemed important in the first year. They responded to letters from the editor with these brief sketches. The editor asked that they be as informal as they wished, indeed that they avoid writing themes on "My First Year of Teaching." The result—this issue—is a reservoir of things to be expected, learned, enjoyed, avoided during the first exciting months. The veteran teacher should find in it a smile or two and a touch of nostalgia; the senior in college will see his hopes and fears here.

Next year the journal will return for an issue to the young teacher to

record as interestingly and realistically as possible the activities that fill a week in and out of school at typical periods of the year. Again the gracious co-operation of young teachers will be sought. The response this year was most heartening.

—J. E. Grinnell, *Editor*

"Teaching, Like Gaul, Is Divided—"

Charmenz Lenhart

At the risk of being termed "ignorant" I venture a sweeping generalization. In my brief encounter with practical education I found that teaching, like "all Gaul," is divided into three problem groups: temporary problems (those arising from certain specific causes and adjusting with time and particular care); inherent problems (those basic in human nature and therefore in their teaching field); and novitiate problems (those arising from the inexperience of the teacher). Needless to say I encountered all three.

Being too busy to notice inherent problems immediately and too inexperienced to recognize novitiate ones, the first problems which I had to face were those of an exigent, though temporary, nature.

Undoubtedly outstanding among these was the matter of associating the child and his name. Although a small matter for most people, for me it was a titan-task. To my regret, I found that I had never troubled myself about remembering a name until the person by his own acts was known; thus for well into the first month names slid in and out of my mind for all the world like dates during a history examination.

Some things there are in a person's life which he carries with him to the

grave. My first week teaching English to almost one hundred seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, and music to all the grades and high school pupils has carved for itself a separate little niche forever in my memory. Along with the meeting of twelve new teachers, numerous frantic par-



ents, and three hundred school children in my own classes, I was fighting the dread disease—amnesia, for there, day after day (and I later discovered week after week) some child was telling me I had said he should do this, come up after school for something, stay after class to get something, etc., when I was in complete ignorance of the whole matter.

Awareness of the next educational problem was slow-developing. It was more a "felt thing" than any thing else nameable. For a beginning teacher it demands never-ending adjustment. I am referring to the inherent all-encompassing problem of human personality.

It was sometime during that first month that each child's personality began to assert itself enough to affect me. I found that everything that was said or assigned, every inflection of the voice, every movement and gesture was seized by these thirty odd receptors in each class and interpreted, shall I say, empirically? I saw here all of the children we had talked about in psychology and educational methods: the egocentric, the extrovert, the malcontent, the eager, the dispirited, the lonely, the show-off, the bourgeois, the poet, the giggler, the silly, the stubborn, and on and on.

I saw them all—I think I knew them all, but I couldn't do anything about it in the fifty minutes in which one

must further the knowledge of a child in a particular subject. If I had had the time, I couldn't have handled it. All I can say is, I tried just as everyone tries in life to handle personalities he meets. In larger schools, perhaps, the chaff and the wheat are separated, but in life they are found as one.

Since no supervision at all was given to my teaching, I know nothing of its worth. I should judge that factual materials though easier taught are more slowly grasped. I devised my own teaching methods that suited, so I hoped, the occasion. If any success in the teaching of literature was achieved, I should imagine it to be a sort of contagious result, as I just read, had them read, and attempted explanation from time to time.

Like most neophytes I desired oversimplification of teaching devices. Result—many and varied problems.

Most difficult of all was the formulation of a policy by which I could act and think, and on which I could rely. Something terse and practical—a never-failing formula. I never succeeded in such a formula in life; I didn't in school-teaching. Like life, its ramifications are too numerous.

I thought once, speciously, I must be almost superhumanly technical in my teaching attitude so these adolescents will respect superior knowledge if not personality. It was a poor thought. They would develop random knowledge interspersed with gaps where connection with life was missing. Then I thought, naively, of being very human; trying to relate all their work to life. This was a little more successful with brighter and older children, but the humanitarian concept brought upon me many a new disciplinary problem. Back to the old laws of learning—what can be best developed as a philosophy by a teacher, when one-third the class is ready, is willing and is eager to learn, one part will never achieve the law of readiness, and a part resenting, as only more recent generations have learned to resent, any new idea unless dictatorially imposed? Of course I am not attempting to say that cor-

rectly handled by an experienced teacher, a great many issues would assume such importance, but I wonder if the majority of them wouldn't always remain? I remember them as ever present, even in college. Aren't they connected directly with life, and can any methods class remedy them if the students haven't gotten along in human relationships up to that point? Teaching is merely the meeting of one long experience pattern with thirty others, every hour. In daily life one meets and adjusts to one at a time. But the adjustment to thirty!

I am trying to teach in the most approved manner, as I see it. I made, unconsciously, a list of the best teaching habits of my own teachers and am trying to work from there. I know I will prove a disappointment to the teachers college which

A Beginner's Reaction

Edmund Cissna, Jr.

Recently I was talking to one of my favorite college professors. In his first question he asked me how I was getting along in my home town. When I answered him that I could not have done better anywhere, he gave me the following answer: Confucius says, "He is a good man who succeeds in his own home town." I believe that Confucius was misquoted again; the saying should go, "He who cannot succeed in his own home town surely has a poor home town." Really I have had an excellent place to work both from the standpoint of the pupils and community.

The school activities that I have most enthusiasm for are those that show growth and improvement within the school. This year I have spent a considerable part of my spare time in helping get this school ready to play six-man football next fall as we are too small to play the regular game. Just in case some reader may be interested in a similar undertaking I will tell a little about what we did. The first problem was finances

mothered me when I turn again in what must be the accustomed groove. I think perhaps teaching was always well-done by good teachers. I know I take time out to reach the slower students; my desire goads me to turn to the quicker, and I think perhaps I just reach the middleman.

Now that I have looked over what turns out to be a philosophy of teaching, I am discouraged, and I realize how hard it is to turn in inspired teachers. I know that I have committed heresy in this thesis, by reason of being reactionary—a crime in any field. But then, too, I was discouraged when I saw test results for my freshman class in *Lady of the Lake*. As one boy put it in his column in the school-paper, "It's water just too deep for us poor fish to swim in." Why, because it, too, was a totally new experience.

to buy the equipment, but it was solved without great difficulty. The receipts from a dinner given by the



P. T. A., a donkey basketball game, the independent basketball team, and, greatest of all, contributions by the local merchants were sufficient to pay most of the bill for fifteen uniforms. A small deficit is to be met by next year's gate receipts. What type of equipment should we buy was our next question. After comparing equipment and prices from several sporting goods companies we decided to buy plain, but serviceable, equipment that offered good protection to the boys. Maybe I have led you to believe that I intend to make myself a great football coach; I have no such intentions. I only want the high

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school boys to have a chance to physical and mental development that I missed until going to college.

Should plans go as they are now I intend to help get a school cafeteria started and buy a motion picture projector also. The latter is to be used as a classroom teaching aid.

Thus far from this article you cannot tell whether I teach any classes or not. Incidentally, like most teachers, I have tried. My regular teaching schedule is as follows: government, United States history, general shop, woodworking, and seventh and eighth grade general shop two days each week. In addition to my regular classes, I am freshman homeroom adviser, sponsor of a club, and leader in a guidance group. Next year I hope to add a home mechanics club for girls.

Just yesterday the P. T. A. elected me president for next year. In spite of the fact I knew they could have

made a much better choice, I accepted when the following saying came to my mind: "Whenever anyone asks you to accept some responsibility, don't look at it as an imposition, but take it as an opportunity to grow."

In answer to the question "What is education?" someone has said that education is what we pay for and don't want. Well, too much of the philosophy underlying this business of teaching is based on the above statement. You get paid for rendering a service that some to whom the service is rendered do not want. This is what I dislike most about my job. However, a compensating factor is that most of the pupils do want to come to school and have a purpose. Maybe, with a few years' experience and a few more courses in education I will be able to overcome this undesirable factor of disinterested pupils.

occasions, yet is very fortunate to be in the classroom out of the cold in winter. This fellow is very non-professional; he does no work, ridicules those who do work, keeps salaries



low, and forever needs prodding along. So, it is from the "I guess it's okay" fellow to the "I'm eating regularly" stagnant shirker.

To go further into categories of teaching groups would be such a waste, because everyone forms a somewhat similar concept of these 'molders of character.' To name a few, there is the old maid, either male or female; the grandma; the antique, that individual who has become a part of the school physical plant in-

stead of remaining a part of the faculty—this petrified pedant has long forgotten that the school is for the pupils and not him.

But, in spite of all these peculiar looking and acting people who call themselves school teachers, there are a few persons in this greatest of professions who are genuinely real. Yes, people who have not succumbed to that traditional mien of inferiority. They take part in every worth-while school and community activity and are continually looking ahead with a foresightedness and enthusiasm that is wholesome and stimulating to their students and colleagues with whom they work.

It is from those enthusiastic promoters that I have attempted to select some four or five heroes around which to mold my attitudes and build my experiences as a teacher and one who has chosen an educational career.

My particular position is that of commerce teacher in a rural school in the southern part of Ohio. I teach typewriting, commercial law, principles of business, and shorthand, as well as serve as faculty adviser of the school newspaper. The school is situated in the center of the township and all of the students are transported by school busses. As a result, extra-curricular activities are limited.

From my work with the students and the publication of the *Huntsman*, our monthly newspaper, I have derived more satisfaction than any other single phase of endeavor. I sincerely believe we have filled a real community need. Our paper is an eight-page, tabloid-sized affair which we have printed in a nearby city. We center our news around activities of the school and community, with the idea of informing everyone in the community as to what is being done by the school. The *Huntsman* is circulated to everyone in the community without charge. Since we have a large circulation we have little difficulty in soliciting advertisements from business houses in the county seat, eight miles away. School patrons send in interesting news bits from time to time and we reproduce

From Southern Ohio

Earl Koile

"Hello, Joe; how do you like teaching?"

"All right, I guess; anyway it will do until I can find something better."

That is one type of pseudo-school teacher—the one who teaches merely because he or she does not have an opportunity to do something else. When the individual who looks upon teaching as a profession and sincerely enjoys it encounters a member of the "I guess it's okay" group, there should be a shooting in school defense." Surely the judge, if he knew the circumstances, would recommend to the local school board nothing short of an increase in salary for work well done.

Now the first group usually consists of younger teachers and if they do not find something better to do, they grow into a class that is a far greater menace to public education. Consider the fellow who makes no preparation for his classes, is ready to bark about his set-up at any and all

such items on a society page, which, it has been reported, they thoroughly enjoy.

After we publish the last issue of our paper, it is our plan to have several copies bound into booklet form and substitute these bound copies for the yearbook. It was the general opinion that we could be more successful in centering our interests around the newspaper as a school project than to make any attempt at a stereotyped annual.

It has been realized that no small degree of the success of our paper, and it is considered successful by many, is a result of the enthusiasm and support given by the school officials and the superintendent. They have indorsed the enterprise enthusiastically, besides offering many valuable suggestions.

Even though we have no journalism class, club, or even an activities period around which to center our publication, the staff, which is

changed every issue, still finds time to whip the copy into shape and solicit ads. We meet one night a month for a copy desk for the ensuing issue.

Often we take excerpts from the *Huntsman* and prepare news copy for the school page of the county seat newspaper. This, too, has a school interpretation value in which the pupils take great pride.

So, with many conflicting ideas and ideals, it is difficult for the classroom teacher to determine an ultimate objective. However, as a last analysis, I always try to remember what a school teacher friend once said to me while I was in high school: "People can teach where teachers can't." I concluded, if the individual can be a person who realizes his responsibility, perhaps he can attain some degree of success as a teacher. Who knows, those oft belated pupils may find a friend and counselor if they discover that their teacher is a person.

own person to a great degree. His ego is exposed from the moment he enters the classroom. The moment he dons the robe of prophet and begins to dramatize himself he loses perspective and lays himself open to concerted and gleeful attack by his charges.

The pupil does not see in the teacher the gradual accumulation of ideas and attitudes newly come to the firing line. He sees only the sum—one object, the teacher—and he is either impressed or indifferent. Reading that cool, impersonal, or perhaps antagonistic appraisal in the eyes of a hundred strangers is, to say the least, disconcerting at first.

When I began teaching I was confronted for the first time with a group of people whose reactions to me were uninhibited by the decrees of ordinary social intercourse. They didn't have to smile and pretend. They were as indifferent as nature and waiting to be conquered. Whether or not I conquered I frankly cannot say. In some instances probably I did; in others, no. At any rate I realized quickly that I wasn't going to be ac-

cepted or tolerated just because it was the thing to do. Here were no wide-eyed innocents thirsting for knowledge; these were grim judges, waiting to be convinced.

Even though from the first I *knew* what it was I had to do, I could not realize fully the meaning of that knowledge. Dozens of situations were to arise for which I was not prepared. That is, I could not foresee my immediate emotional reaction to a given situation and consequently how that reaction would color the plan of action I would take.

If any professional man should follow the Socratic principle of self-examination, it is the teacher. Certainly he should know himself, and I fear there are times when he should be prepared against himself. I am not speaking of those erratic individuals who are entirely emotionally and nervously insecure. They should never be teachers to begin with. I mean the teacher who is a normal human being and not entirely insensitive. He should be able to look at himself with complete objectivity. In short, he should be aware of his own potentialities for good and evil. He must recognize the limits of his own influence. If he does, he will not be unduly alarmed by what at times seems to be complete ineffectuality on his part.

There have been occasions in the past year when my pupils have gazed upon me with much the same air as I have often noted a wall. There have been moments when I knew my head was bloody and might even seem to an unbiased observer slightly inclined. It has been rather difficult for me not to take indifference toward certain subject matter, or dislike for it, as a personal assault. Natural protests against certain classroom formalities appeared to be attacks upon my integrity.

Only after sleepless nights and slow acclimatization did I realize how completely I must "come out of myself" if I were to be a good teacher. Perhaps the TS₁M₈I formula resolves itself into only one thing: experience. And the meaning of that, I suspect, can only be proved by time.

TS₁ M₈I

Kenneth Payne

To explain something one is not certain he understands himself has dangerous, if interesting, possibilities and is not exactly in accord with the commonly accepted standards of hard-working young school teachers. The situation becomes increasingly precarious when the subject of the expositor is the one he most fears, yet loves, to talk about—himself. However, it is not I alone, but that I in relation to eight months of school teaching which is the subject. Chemically one might put it TS₁M₈I. The "TS" may stand for either "township school" or "ticklish situations." The more cynical-minded might say the terms were interchangeable.

Romanticising one's profession may be a comforting practice for a time, but eventually I think it tends to cloud the vision and impart a sense of frustration. I had rather adopt the attitude of a workman toward a job he likes and means to do well. The teacher must of necessity exploit his

That First Year!

Eloise Moss

Early last September I packed my trunk, said good-bye to my family, and set out for my very first job—a position which happened to be in a completely strange city in another state. If I felt any misgivings, they were minor. I thought that I—free, white, and nearly twenty-one—was equipped to meet practically any demand which might be made of me. I have a more accurate estimate of my own abilities now, I believe.

From the very beginning, my work has been much to my liking. I teach a fourth grade consisting of thirty boys and girls from the homes of professional and business groups. The staff of the school, made up of eighteen teachers for grades one to six, is quite progressive, and the building facilities are good. Room teachers have charge of all instruction except music, art, and physical education, which are departmentalized.

Launching my first unit was a great adventure. The state course of study is definite concerning topics, so I chose one which seemed to hold the most interest for my eight- and nine-year-olds. I "set the stage" with books and pictures about pioneer life; they did all the rest. Before the first month had passed they were engrossed with the planning and building of a prairie schooner sufficiently large to hold three of the group. The girls dressed dolls in diminutive reproductions of pioneer costumes, and various boys added miniature covered wagons to make a "wagon train." The group also painted a frieze on pioneer life. As a culmination to the unit of study, the children wrote and dramatized a four-act play called "In Pioneer Days." This was given just before Thanksgiving to an audience made up of their parents.

We had all been so busy getting acquainted, planning, working, and playing that there had been neither time nor occasion for discipline problems. Reading, English, and writing were integrated in the social science

unit. Interest carried over to the drill subjects, arithmetic and spelling. Many of the spelling words grew directly out of their creative writing



needs; and the best possible motivation for the study of multiplication was provided when the class planned the dimensions of the big schooner.

After three months had gone by so smoothly, I no longer felt like a beginner. That was fortunate, for the next unit of study outlined for me, "a born-and-bred Hoosier," was Michigan history and development. I thought I had done some careful study of certain subjects in college, but I quickly revised all my ideas of thorough research. Somehow I managed to learn enough to get by, for we have now practically finished the twelve-by-fifteen foot picture map depicting the history of the state. The pictures were the simplest part; cutting a small map into tiny squares and reproducing each line on a much larger square according to scale is an extremely difficult task for fourth graders. Half of the group worked on the floor of the workroom drawing the map, while the remaining half prepared an exhibit on the chief products of Michigan. Every child has worked in both groups. Before Easter we shall hang the big map at the back of our schoolroom, arrange the products exhibit, and invite the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in our building to examine our work.

In the spring when the weather improves, we shall begin to learn about our own city. This work evolves naturally from the study of the whole of Michigan.

So I find myself nearing the close of my first year of teaching. I've made a great many mistakes, of course, but

I've learned many things which will help me in the future. I have never had a dull moment since I began work last fall; and I have proved once and for all to my own satisfaction that *teaching can be fun!*

A Neophyte in Industrial Arts

Lloyd Williams

Come with me to a school which offers the facilities for an ideal teaching situation. As you enter the front door the smooth, cheerful voices of the highly-trained elementary teachers give you your first awareness of the friendly atmosphere of the school. After you have passed the elementary rooms and the offices, you approach a stairway. Walk down the stairs and enter the first door on your right. This is where I teach in the industrial arts department of the Indiana State Teachers College Laboratory School.

How would you like to begin your teaching career where not a bench is permanently fastened to the floor, machinery is not stationary, new ideas, methods, and experiments are being tried at all times, where fellow-teachers are progressive and eager to further their knowledge in the newer teaching methods, where student-teachers are trying for the first time to put their four years of



training into practice? This is the situation in which I am beginning my teaching career.

In the capacity of graduate assistant I have enjoyed this first year immensely. My teaching load consists of three classes in the junior

high school. They are: craft work in the 7-A class; woodwork, foundry, and bench-metal in the 8-B; drawing, sheet-metal, and electricity in the 8-A class, while the rest of my day is spent at the college working toward a Master's degree.

With other teachers, I participate at various times in extra-curricular activities which are connected with the school. Playing the part of Tom Sawyer in the faculty play "School Daze" gave me the greatest enjoyment. Other activities I have enjoyed are: playing basketball with the faculty team, performing various official duties at all the school games, directing the Junior High School Hobby Club, coaching the varsity baseball team, and teaching a church school class for young boys.

A special industrial arts class, consisting of twelve mentally retarded pupils, makes my first year teaching experience different from that of most first-year teachers. This class is a group of elementary students whose IQ's range from 42 to 70. One of my most interesting experiences was with a boy of this group. He has an IQ of 42 and is handicapped with a serious speech defect. His habits of personal hygiene are very poor. His hair is unkempt and his face and clothes are usually dirty, but he does try to keep his hands clean. This boy kept asking if he could make a high chair. Realizing the difficulty in making a high chair, I suggested that he wait until he had more training in the working of wood. After a few days had elapsed, the boy brought an orange crate into the shop. I decided to let him work at his own will, wondering what he was going to make from the orange crate. In building the project, I found that he had removed one end of the crate, and had cut a smoothly rounded hole, comparable to the seat of a nursery chair. Although his project was crudely constructed, he gained a joy of achievement which he had never before experienced. At the conclusion he stated that the chair, which has since proven to be of practical value, was to be a Christmas present for his baby brother.

The readers of this article have probably noticed that only pleasures and enjoyments have been discussed, and undoubtedly wonder where the discussing of the grief enters. I can truthfully say that there have been no displeasures or griefs connected with my first year of teaching. However, there have been minor problems with which I have been confronted that necessitated the adjusting of a few premises which I adopted during my undergraduate work.

Impressions of a First-Year Teacher

Elizabeth Fahr

I teach commerce and home economics in the Hoagland Township High School, which is about thirteen miles southeast of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Hoagland's population is about three hundred and there are about two hundred and fifty students attending the twelve grades of school.

This being my first year of teaching experience, I will not be able to compare Hoagland school with other schools of its size. However, I will be able to give a few of my impressions of the school, its students, its teachers, and of the teaching profession.

It has been greatly to my advantage that the school is offering its first year of commercial work because we have had all new material with which to work. And, too, the students are perhaps a little more interested because they realize that they are the first to have the opportunity of a preliminary business training. And, it is also to my advantage that I do not have the methods of some other teacher to change. Commercial work is work in which many bad habits may be developed and it is my desire to eliminate or prevent these bad habits—I would say that it is much easier to prevent these bad habits than to eliminate them.

Being the only first-year teacher

While realizing that most of the principles of teaching are not debatable as to their value, there are several which must be readjusted to meet certain situations.

If future years of teaching prove to be as enjoyable as my first year, I shall feel that my training has been well worth the effort. Watching the progress of students building character and personalities repays one for all the work and worry that may come into the life of a teacher.

on the faculty at Hoagland, I, at first, felt very inferior to the rest of the teachers. Especially at faculty meetings I felt inferior, because they seemed to have little respect for my new ideas which I was eager to



try out. However, I have never felt inferior in my teaching of commerce, because, since it was a new department, none of the faculty knew a great deal about it.

I suppose every beginning teacher has had some experience which will remain in her mind longer than any other. I had my first feeling of accomplishment one day when, after explaining a new assignment in bookkeeping class, one girl seemed to be the only one who didn't understand the material for the new lesson. After class I spent some time re-explaining the whole lesson. After I finished she looked up—all the wrinkles from her forehead had disappeared—and said, "Why, Miss Fahr, it just comes to you all at once, doesn't it? I understand everything so much better now. Isn't bookkeeping fun?"

My first great surprise and dis-

appointment at Hoagland was when I asked my pupils in a typing class to type some of their experiences and tell about a few of their interesting trips or vacations. When I got their papers I found that their experiences were very limited and that most of them hadn't been any farther from Hoagland than Fort Wayne. They seemed to have no knowledge whatsoever of the world outside of their small community. I have found since then that they don't read and are very little interested in what happens in the outside world. They all seem to be people of average means, but they are surely not very progressive in their practical education. I am now wondering if all small communities are like this—I sincerely hope not.

"Experience Keeps a Dear School"

Charles Fauset

Excuse me while I look up the meaning of the word, "dear." Here is the page; let's see. It means expensive and costly. Hold on! Here is another meaning—beloved and highly esteemed. I am trying to find out what Benjamin Franklin meant when he said, "Experience keeps a dear school." Perhaps he was referring to the first meaning; perhaps, the second. However, I am convinced that if he had been referring to first year experience in teaching he could have had both meanings in mind.

I have found that this first year of teaching has been costly. I have studied late; I have risen early. I have marked "spelling" and "capitalization" over words long after the neighbors had retired.

Learning the difference between college students and high school pupils can be costly. I remember that I was very much disappointed when I found that many of my pupils were taking English because they had to have the credits to be graduated.

Maybe the high school age accounts for that—maybe I have forgotten about my interests at that age.

Like many other Indiana schools, Hoagland has the basketball craze. People of the community seem to be more interested that Hoagland has a winner in basketball than that it has a good school.

After having taught for about eight months I feel much more sure of myself than I did at first. There's a satisfying feeling that is the greatest reward when you feel that you're really helping pupils in work that is worth-while. If my future teaching experience is to be as joyful as my first year has been, I look forward to many happy hours.

On the other hand, I have found that this year's teaching has been a dear (second meaning) school. I have never been so respected and highly esteemed. I have the impression that the American high school boy is a



hero worshipper. It is natural that a teacher who shows enthusiasm and scholarship in the boy's favorite subject field can be the object of this worship. I do not, however, include the statement just mentioned as an objective in teaching. It is merely a means to an objective. A teacher cannot do much with a boy who holds Humphrey Bogart or John Garfield as his ideal.

I have also noticed the respect that the parents and the community hold for teachers. They seem to be eager to respect the teacher's knowledge and character. I have felt this fact, and I have concluded that it is only

fair on my part to strive for high scholarship and good character.

If I were asked to list a few essentials for success in first year teaching, I should answer: "First, know your subject matter and keep up with your field; second, have an outward enthusiasm for your subject—there seems to be much carry over of enthusiasm; third, establish a good teacher-pupil relationship (On many occasions I have watched with envy the older teachers who were masters at this art. Then I have cursed the young teacher's lot—he must guard his teacher-pupil relationship very, very carefully.); finally, live up to the standards which the parents and pupils have already set for you."

I didn't mean to lecture. After all, one year's experience doesn't make an authority of a person. I realize that I have had my problems and disappointments from my teaching year. At times I have "hated teaching." Did I? No. I was merely hating my "not teaching." Edgar Lee Masters told his "Lucinda Matlock" to say, "It takes life to love life." Likewise, it takes teaching to love teaching.

All Is Not Pleasant

"A Social Studies Major"

In looking back over the past year of my teaching experiences I find it difficult to know where to begin. I will not attempt to give them in order or sequence, but merely make statements of my impressions.

There is only one good reason, that I can see, in stating my opinions or thoughts, and that is that they will be the thoughts of a teacher who has not yet crystallized into a set form as so many of my colleagues have done. That is my greatest fear in being a high school teacher. To grow old and fat while in the rut of doing everything in a set routine order is a most horrible picture for a thinking person. Perhaps I am too much of an idealist. Anyway, I hope I never become *typed* in my teaching. I see so many teachers who have used one textbook or

certain instruments of teaching so long that they greet everything new with sarcasm and antagonism. The level of thinking of many teachers is so bound that I wonder if a great bulk of them are underpaid.

One problem of a beginning teacher is to find a common meeting ground with the students not only in the classroom but out of the classroom. To find out if his ideas are in keeping with the school system and the ethos of the community is a very important step. To a person who has always lived in the southern section of the state and is then suddenly transplanted to the industrial regions of the north, there are certain adjustments. The foreign element of the populace has its effect upon the lives of the people. Many of the children of foreign blood have very pronounced abilities, and if they could be encouraged, would have something to offer to society. Their home environment, however, seems to encourage them only to prepare for a job in the mills as soon as they are through high school. A very small group, possibly ten per cent, go to college. In the high school courses offered there still seems to be too much of the idea of preparing for college rather than life. Most teachers are able to offer too little help of practical value.⁹

The discipline of most schools in the northern part of the state seems to be much more lax than in down-state schools. This may be due in part to the industrial environment. The rule in our school seems to be that the fewer the rules the fewer there are broken. The idea is to let the children spend their energies at what they will as long as they attend school and are quiet in class. This energy, if directed into the proper channels, would prove fruitful to the child and community. Extra-curricular activities might be one answer.

One of the glaring weaknesses of our system is short class periods and large assemblies. Assemblies as study periods are a waste of time for more than one-half of the pupils will loaf if given the opportunity. Longer class periods with directed study and little

or no home assignments would prove beneficial for several reasons. Among these reasons are: (1) students can be taught to study more effectively if supervised properly; (2) all students do not have equal opportunities at home, and some work after school; (3) carrying school books home at evening after studying all day has a poisonous effect upon the mind that is detrimental to school work; (4) there is better opportunity to take care of individual differences; (5) it gives more time for extra-curricular activities; (6) the teacher's time as well as the students' is better utilized; (7) it creates the habit of working well during working hours and condemns loafing; and (8) efficient utilization of school time would create a respect from the community and build school morale.

One great need in high schools is a rearrangement of the curriculum. Some of the most abstract subjects such as algebra are taught during the freshman year. The increased enrollment in our schools, due to the lack of employment and certain laws, has given us a lower level of student ability with which to work. In spite of this fact we are very slow to do anything about it. Algebra is a very conspicuous example. The present algebra textbook has been in use for twelve years with no change. It does very well for perhaps the upper third of the class, but for the remainder it is only a task to be performed for a credit.

There will be no great improvement in our school systems until they are put under the control of better informed supervisors. The other improvement which will have to follow is better prepared teachers. One requirement that should be placed upon all college seniors who are not English majors is a course in English grammar before graduation. Another change that would go for making better-qualified teachers is to give only one general methods course and replace the methods course in each field with practice teaching in each licensed field. In other words, methods should be handled with the hands instead of passed before the

eyes. There is a necessity for a first-hand acquaintance with the immediate tools of each field and the extra-curricular activities adjacent to it. Theory is all right in theory, but too often the surface is not scratched deep enough to leave a telling mark.

Things That Have Happened

Dan Winchell

"His father was a Scotch merchant. His mother had married a Danish planter in the is. of St. Croix. She left him and lived with the Scotsman. In 1759 her husband secured a divorce, and the court forbade his wife's remarriage."

"I don't understand what it says in this book," said a very small seventh grade girl referring to the



quotation given above. It was one of the unusually pleasant November days we had in 1939, and the classroom windows were open.

The fifty seventh graders were writing short biographies of famous Americans and Mary had chosen Alexander Hamilton. We were having a work period in class and she had consulted several of her neighbors before asking me. None understood, and all were interested.

"Doc" Shannon once said that when a child asks a question involving any aspect of sex, tell him truthfully only what he wants to know and nothing more.

⁹Everyman's Encyclopaedia, Scribner's, 1933.

¹⁰Dr. J. R. Shannon, professor of education, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana.

"It means," said I, "that Alexander Hamilton's mother left her husband and went to live with another man. While she was living with the Scotsman, Alexander was born."

"Oh," Mary said, "I thought that people had to be married to have babies," and she went back to work. I don't know whether that is good or bad, but it's what happened.

John is a senior boy who is not many years younger than I. He had been in my second semester class about two weeks and had been absent the previous day. Shortly after class started, I asked a simple question. He couldn't answer it. The conversation went something like this:

I: "Anyone who had even glanced through the assignment should have been able to answer that."

He: "I was absent yesterday and didn't know the assignment."

I: "That's no excuse. Being absent one day is no reason for missing two days' lessons."

He: "Now listen. You've been telling me a lot of things lately. Now I want to tell you a few things. I don't like the way this class is being run. For instance, on that test last week I missed fifteen and got 'D,' while

so-and-so missed four and got 'A.' I don't understand that kind of stuff."

I: "That's right. You don't understand it. And maybe you had better leave class until you cool off."

He: "That's good enough for me. You put me out." (He was getting excited and hadn't meant to say that.)

I: (To myself) "Ye gods, he's as big as I am, and Education 551 didn't teach me a bit of jui-jitsu." (To him in forced mock-Barrymore accents) "Get out."

He: "All right. And here's my book. I won't be using it any more." (His face was very red and he was more excited. He fumbled for his citizenship book but got his safety book by mistake and dropped it on my desk. Half way to the door he noticed his mistake, stopped, shuffled his remaining books nervously, and went on out.)

I: (To myself) "Phew!" (To the class) "And now if you'll notice the outline on the board——"

The next day during my off-period, John came to me in the library and asked to take a test he had missed on the day he was absent. I explained to him why his grade had been low on the test he referred to yesterday,

and then I went on to tell him plainly what I expected his classroom conduct to be in the future. He nodded his head, worked out the test questions I had handed him, and came to class later without a word. He has worked well since.

I learned something. Most high school students have a very keen sense of personal dignity. When that sense of dignity is violated before others, they react unfavorably. Outside of class they accept criticism graciously which would outrage them if given before others. Maybe it won't always work that way though. This school teaching racket is new to me.

In my long teaching career (five months, three weeks, and one day to date), I believe that the following things have been of value to me:

1. Criticize mildly; praise readily.
2. Ask freely for advice from more experienced teachers. They appreciate it and it helps you.
3. Don't speak too hastily.
4. Find out as much as possible about the environment of the pupils.
5. Smile often; laugh enough.
6. Don't be surprised easily.
7. Don't have a temper.

The How and Why of Chemistry in a Small High School

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"In almost anything experiment is better than precept."

—Quintilian

It is almost trite to say that teachers of the twentieth century are even more convinced of the truth of Quintilian's statement made in the first century than he was himself. Our conviction is based on the accumulation of the experience which has come in the interim since that ancient teacher gave us this maxim.

State courses of study now offer ample opportunity for high school students to have this actual experience in experimentation through the laboratory sciences. In the average secondary school, however, the only ology. This is true mainly because it is required. Chemistry is overlooked in the average curriculum.

The most prevalent reason for this absence of chemistry courses in our Indiana high schools is the false assumption held by school administrators that this laboratory science is expensive to inaugurate and maintain. This is a fallacy.

When approached with the idea of offering such a course, school officials immediately think of the elaborate laboratories and equipment with which they are familiar in colleges and universities. Such facilities are impossible, unnecessary, and in most cases undesirable even if available for the average high school.

Material¹ for this article is not based on theory, but upon actual experience in two small high schools

¹Honey Creek and Otter Creek township high schools, Vigo County.

in Vigo County, Indiana (approximately 250 pupils each). Within the last three years these two schools have placed in their programs adequate courses in chemistry with a suprisingly small outlay of money. The last of these two schools to install this science did so in the school year 1938-1939. It is from the latter case that we shall cite concrete examples.

In this school, biology and physics have been taught for a number of years; chemistry had never been offered. A plan was evolved whereby chemistry and physics would be taught in alternate years, thus allowing juniors and seniors in two years to get both sciences if so desired.

It had been customary to appropriate fifty dollars each year in the township school budget for science equipment. The chemistry teacher was told that besides this amount another one hundred dollars would be set aside for starting the work in chemistry. Thus, armed with the promise of one hundred fifty dollars, scouting was begun for the best means of using the funds. Lest some who read this be already discouraged by the "magnitude" of this figure let us insert here parenthetically that the fund was not exhausted and they could, if necessary, have started with a much smaller figure.

With only one hundred fifty dollars they were hardly in a position to be extravagant, but the initial expenditure may at first thought appear to be just that. Being a rural school, there was no gas available for heat. Alcohol lamps have been used for for many years as a method of producing heat in the chemical labora-

tory and may still be used to good advantage when absolutely necessary. They are, however, slow, and what is worse, they are a fire hazard when used by inexperienced laboratory workers.

Upon inquiry it was found that installation of bottled gas with outlets for five Bunsen burners (ten students) and a year's supply of gas could be made for slightly less than fifty dollars including burners and all fittings. This was done with no regrets. Since all the high school science is taught in the same room, this addition has proved a valuable asset to the biology work and will to the physics classes-to-come.

Next step in the laboratory and courses building process was the selection of the laboratory manual and workbook. Choice of the "lab" manual was made at this time in order to help in the selection of equipment and chemical supplies. This was done by going through the manual and listing the items needed for the various experiments. Some manuals have this list already compiled.

The estimate of the size of the prospective class was based on that of the physics classes of years previous. This was later found to be low, due, no doubt, to the novelty of a new course. After one year this figure will probably stabilize itself for obvious reasons.

Schools which now offer physics but not chemistry will be at a distinct advantage when they do add chemistry because of the duplication of equipment in many cases. This is especially true of glassware, spectroscopes, periodic charts, and batteries.

Five duplicate copies were made of the equipment-supply need-list. One of these was retained, the other four were mailed to what were considered leading supply houses with a request for estimates. In making out quantity orders an effort was made to keep in mind preparation for twenty students (later found to be twenty-eight). In a week or ten days the estimates were returned. It was interesting to note that of the four estimates there was not more than

two dollars difference in any of them. The amount was approximately thirty-eight dollars.

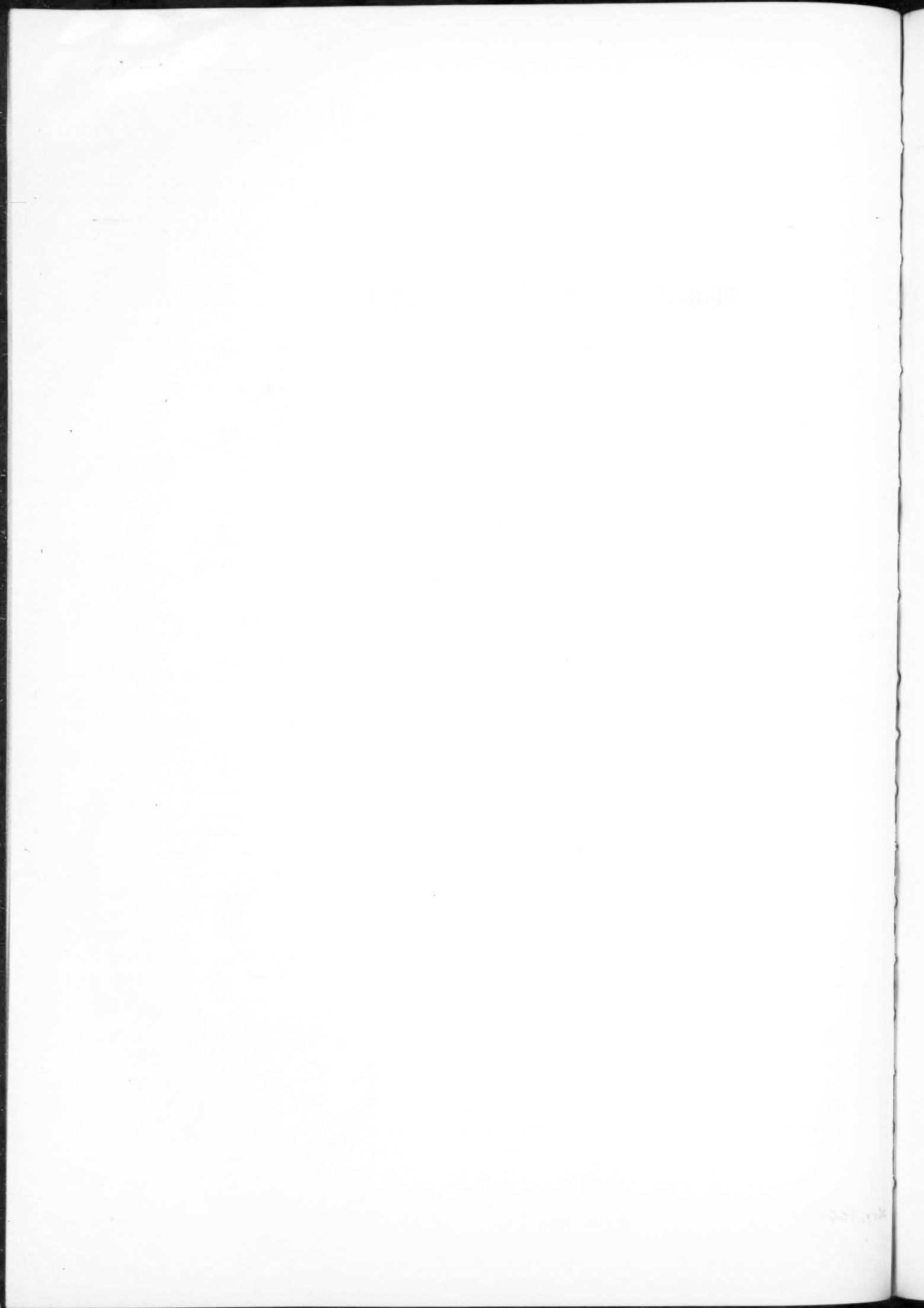
Working on the principle that the time to buy a thing is when the money is available, some items were added to the equipment list until the final billing, including freight charges, was \$58.25. This amount with the fifty dollars for the gas installation was still about forty dollars short of the allotment. There were ample materials with which to

start and it would be possible to make other purchases more intelligently after going a little farther in the work. Thus, with a total outlay of \$108.25 there was started a good course in high school chemistry including the luxuries of bottled gas.

Quite naturally they do not have everything needed; what science teacher does? They are, however, giving students a view of the field of chemistry and a chance to develop the scientific attitude, which, whether

they become farmers, doctors, lawyers, or laborers, is essential today. It can be said here without attempting sensationalism that with a much smaller amount of money than there was available a course in chemistry could be offered that would be worth the students' time and effort.²

²John J. Rush, J. Carter Eavey, and P. D. Wilkinson, "Simple Aids for the High School Chemistry Course," *The Teachers College Journal*, No. 1, pp. 1-11, September 1936, Vol. VIII.



A PHILOSOPHY OF PLACEMENT . . .

Historians of the future, who will look back upon our times with much more perspective than we possess, are almost certain to observe a prime characteristic of persons living in the middle of the Twentieth Century. They will see that we were extremely job-conscious. It was an era in which much was said about unemployment, about retirement to make way for younger persons, and about many men's jobs being their most precious economic possessions.

This tension over employment precipitates the Placement Bureau into the midst of the economic struggle. Many persons get the notion that a Placement Bureau achieves the ideal when it finds the greatest number of jobs for the greatest number of persons. Of course, that is one measuring stick of success, but there are others.

Placements which do not work out satisfactorily inflict a hardship and injustice on all concerned. Therefore, care must be exercised to suit the individual to the position. So the Placement Bureau at Indiana State Teachers College conceives of its function as threefold: (1) To help the graduate find a position in which he can succeed. (2) To serve the teaching profession generally by helping administrators find qualified persons they need. (3) To aid the orderly process of promotion by recommending in-service teachers.

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Views in the new Fine Arts and Commerce Building at Indiana State Teachers College: At top, (left to right) Prof. Shepherd Young, head of the Department; Prof. Lowell M. Tilson, retiring head of the Music Department; Prof. June Reynerson, head of the Art Department; view in the hall; middle, classroom and commerce machine laboratory; bottom, view in the art gallery.

For Information Write: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana



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